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**MULTIPLE PERSPECTIVES:
A STUDY OF THE VIEWS OF SECOND LANGUAGE
TEACHERS**

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ABSTRACT

One of the features of second language teaching and learning literature has been the emergence of multiple perspectives. While this has been welcomed as a strength of the second language profession, the manner in which teachers cope with a multiplicity of seemingly divergent viewpoints has received scant research attention.

The aim of the present study has been to investigate the extent to which teachers experience doubt or uncertainty as a result of divergent views, as well as exploring the strategies they use for interpreting and accommodating these views. The study is qualitative in nature and uses a teacher questionnaire, a student questionnaire, and teacher interviews to form an interpretive account of six tertiary-level English as a Second Language teachers' responses to multiple perspectives.

The results obtained indicated that divergent views did cause the teachers surveyed to experience a degree of uncertainty and doubt, which for some, created confusion and eroded confidence. Their uncertainties appeared to stem from an inclination to interpret divergent views in antithetical terms, despite the modifying influence of contextual factors. They shared several strategies for analysing conflicting claims, which included referring to their students needs and investigating the source and rationale of a point of view. The six teachers' preparedness to accommodate alternative positions was influenced by their experiential knowledge, popular ideas about teaching and learning, and institutional factors which promoted certain pedagogic practices.

It seems that until now teachers have been provided with few strategies for interpreting and analysing divergent views. Further research needs to be carried out to explore the reality and effects of competing conceptual frameworks on classroom practitioners. The study concludes with practical suggestions on ways in which teachers could be assisted to cope with multiple perspectives in the language teaching and learning field.

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